DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 121 537 RC 009 138

AUTHOR Macpherson, Norman J.
TITLE Toward a Multi-Cultural, Multi-Lingual Education System in the Northwest Territories. Monograph No. 5.
INSTITUTION Saskatchewan Univ., Saskatoon. Indian and Northern Curriculum Resources Centre.
PUB DATE 27 Feb 75
NOTE 29p.; Address presented in the Indian and Northern Dialogue Series (College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, February 27, 1975). Monograph Series contains 7 volumes which include RC 009 134-140
AVAILABLE FROM Indian and Northern Education Program, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, S7N 0W0 ($1.00)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Organization; Administrative Principles; *American Indians; Cultural Interrelationships; *Educational Philosophy; History; *Multilingualism; Policy Formation; Problems; *Program Development
IDENTIFIERS Canada; *Northwest Territories Department of Education

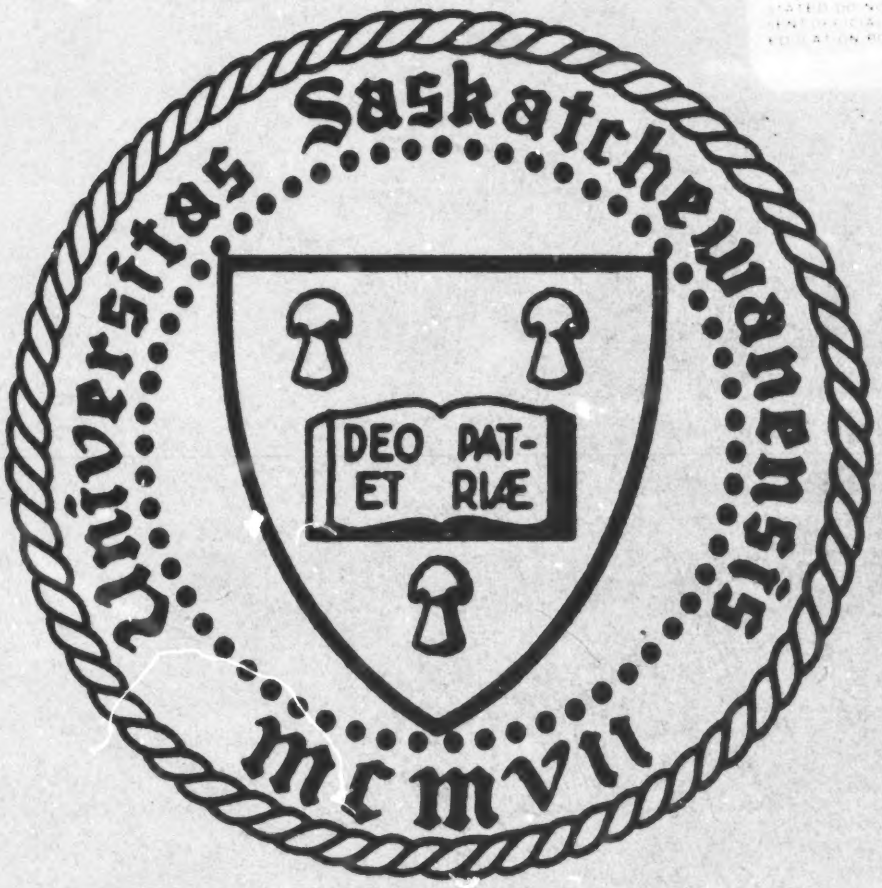
ABSTRACT

Designed to define and clarify the policies and programs of Canada's Northwest Territories' Department of Education, this monograph addressed the following concerns: (1) Program Policies and Problems (emphasis on the vast size and small population of the Northwest Territories and the divergent demands placed upon the Department of Education and its Director); (2) History (documentation of the Department's increasing involvement in the administration and development of a "unified education system"); (3) Extent and Organization (65 schools spread throughout 1.3 million square miles; 625 teachers; 110 classroom assistants, most of whom are of Native descent; regional superintendents assisted by supervisors in charge of Special and Continuing Education and by traveling teacher consultants; the Yellowknife headquarters and its various divisions; adult education; and specialized training programs); (4) Principles (parental right to choose the type of education suitable for their children; cultural relevancy; language of the learner during the first three years of education; a multi-cultural/multi-lingual objective; and education which develops and preserves the confidence of the child); (5) Programs (teacher education programs for Native which emphasize the standards of: northern teaching suitability; community responsiveness; bilingualism; and specific training for northern teaching). (JC)

Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original.

MONOGRAPH SERIES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION



RC009138

INDIAN AND NORTHERN EDUCATION PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA

2

1.00

MONOGRAPH NO. FIVE

TOWARD A MULTI-CULTURAL, MULTI-LINGUAL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

by

NORMAN J. MACPHERSON

This address was presented by Norman J. Macpherson, Director of Education, Government of the Northwest Territories, in the Indian and Northern Dialogue Series at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, on February 27, 1975.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

The purpose of this monograph is to share information and ideas associated with Indian and northern education.

Address correspondence to:

Indian and Northern Education Program
College of Education
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, S7N OWO

Toward A Multi-Cultural, Multi-Lingual Education

System In The Northwest Territories

by

Norman J. Macpherson

Program Policies and Problems

Ladies and gentlemen, I have entitled my remarks "Toward a Multi-Cultural, Multi-Lingual Education System in the Northwest Territories - Programs, Policies and Problems". The title suggests a number of things. First, that we do not have such a system in the Northwest Territories, today, but that we are striving to develop it. I would be less than honest with you if I were to give the impression that we have all the answers to this very difficult question of developing a system of education that serves, at the same time, the needs of Indian, Metis, Eskimo and White peoples who attend the schools in the Northwest Territories. I have no wish to sound like a young bride at her trousseau tea, proudly displaying her wedding gifts - for I, like her, must be aware that the first thing to turn green in the spring may well be the silverware she received at her wedding. So I do not want to appear before you suggesting that the programs and policies we are developing, are the final and flawless answers to a viable educational program for all the people of Canada's north. At the same time, I do not want to say to you, as Columbus said to his crew before they left in 1492 - "We do not know where we are going; when we arrive, we will not know where we are; and when we return, we will not know where we have been; but it is all being paid for from public funds, so we don't have to worry".

I think you should be aware that in spite of the fact that I have worked in northern education more than a dozen years, I am speaking as a white southern middle-class bureaucrat, and that my perceptions of the educational system in the Northwest Territories may not entirely coincide with those of the people for whom the system is designed. I think you should know too, that the Department of Education and its Director are under constant attack from both the critics of the Left, who claim we are not moving fast enough, or far enough, and those on the Right who maintain we are moving too far, too fast. Because the Northwest Territories is in reality a small town of some 38,000 people spread over 1.3 million square miles of territory, and because the school system is such a visible entity in each of the settlements of that vast area, our system is often caught in a savage crossfire between uncritical lovers and unloving critics - between those who love the rigidity of the status quo and resent change - and those critics without love who snipe, attack and demolish, with no concern for the good things in the schools.

Perhaps I could give you an example, citing the very unique type of government that exists in the N. W. T. today. During sessions of the Northwest Territories Council, the directors of the various departments are called to appear before the elected members to answer for the budget, the programs, and the policies of their departments. During the last session of Council which took place from January 10 to January 21 - and was indeed the last session of the present Council - the member for the Western Arctic, who comes from Inuvik, berated both me and the Department of Education for our failure to have any kind of standardized tests that were administered throughout the N. W. T., so that he might know the

progress of his own children in our school system. He took the opportunity to explain to his fellow legislators, to the public at large, and to the press and radio, that a system that did not have more early defined "standards of excellence" in all subject fields, was indeed in a disgraceful condition.

During the same debate, the member for the Eastern Arctic, who makes his home in Frobisher Bay, suggested that the salvation of the education system in the N. W. T. was for the director to insist that only 50% of the southern teachers be rehired for 1975-76, and that the remainder of them be replaced by Eskimo people who would serve in the classrooms. His argument was that in spite of the fact that the Eskimo people would not be able to teach in the traditional manner, and in fact would have no teacher training whatsoever, they would, at least, be able to communicate with their pupils, and in his view, they would be much more effective than are the teachers from southern Canada. This member, who is a very interesting and flamboyant individual, suggested in colorful language that unless such a step was taken, the Department of Education and its director were "bloody short-sighted, criminally stupid and totally unresponsive to the wishes of the people". Both these items, of course, made headlines in the local papers, and were featured or the Mackenzie network of the C. B. C. I'm sure a number of people said, "Our education system is in serious troubles; why doesn't the director of the department listen to what the councillors who are elected by the people tell him."

As you can see, it might be a little difficult to follow faithfully these somewhat divergent suggestions, unless you're an expert at riding two horses going in opposite directions at the same time. And, believe me, I am not suggesting that there is not some merit in each of these ideas.

So perhaps, without even attempting to do so, I have suggested to you some of the more obvious problems of northern education.

Just incidentally, if there is a question period following my remarks, you will find yourselves dealing with one well-schooled, even if not well-skilled, in the art of fielding difficult questions while attempting to come through the process without total loss of skin, and with only a few minor flesh wounds. As you can imagine, having a director on the "hot seat" at Territorial Council is a very interesting spectacle (except for him). I sometimes think that it is the N. W. T.'s substitute for public hanging.

What I would like to do, as briefly as possible, is to give you the extent and complexity of the education system in the Northwest Territories, suggest to you some of the philosophical bases on which we operate and to outline, briefly, some of the programs we are attempting.

History

I am going to make no attempt to give anything like a complete history of education in the Northwest Territories, but simply bring you a few isolated facts that may help you better understand the education system that we have in the Northwest Territories today.

In 1894, the government of Canada made its first grant to a school in the Northwest Territories, $200.00 for 31 students at the Anglican School in Fort Resolution. In 1896, a further $200.00 was given for 26 students at the Roman Catholic School in Fort Providence. Opponents of the school grant system could well say that even in those early years, grants were increasing on a per pupil basis at an alarming rate. It is

interesting to note that for the 1975-76 school year the proposed budget of the Department of Education in the Northwest Territories is approximately 35 million dollars. Education is certainly more expensive than it was in the good old days.

The first federal day school was built at Tuktoyaktuk in 1947, and in 1948, another federal school was built in Port Harrison which is now part of Arctic Quebec. By 1950, there were no fewer than eight agencies - governments, the Anglican, Roman Catholic, and other churches, and mining companies - that had an interest in education in the Northwest Territories.

In 1955 the basis was set for establishing a unified education system in the Northwest Territories, and so it is from this date that we consider education as a unified force throughout this vast area. In 1955, there were approximately 2,000 children attending school regularly in the Northwest Territories; 380 Eskimo youngsters; 618 Indian; and just over 1,000 others. In 1973 12,000 were in attendance in the schools; 4,600 Eskimos, almost 2,000 Indians; and 5,600 others. It should be noted here that in our peculiar registration of pupils, they are divided into Indian, Eskimo and others, and the others include white and Metis young people. Two other dates are noteworthy in this very brief story of education in the north. In 1969 in the Western Arctic, and in 1970 in the Eastern Arctic, responsibility for education North of '60 was transferred from the federal government - the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs - to the Territorial Government. Since that time, the total education program throughout the N. W. T. has been administered by the Northwest Territories Department of Education with no interference from the senior government. The credit for any improvements or advances that have been made, and the

blame for the failings and the shortcomings that are still present in education in the north, are ours alone.

Some of us who work in northern education become somewhat frustrated when people say, "How come in a huge area with a diverse scattered population, many of whom have had no tradition of formal education (and I want to stress the word FORMAL) - how come that you haven't solved all the problems. After all, you have been at it almost twenty years."

Extent and Organization

Our system operates 65 schools throughout the 1.3 million square miles of the Northwest Territories. They stretch from Tungsten, which is a one room school on the Yukon border, to Port Burwell, which is a two room school just off the coast of Arctic Quebec in Hudson Bay; from Fort Smith which is practically on the Alberta Border to Grise Fiord, which is on Ellesmere Island and which we claim is the farthest north school in the world - 76°N. We have six highschools within our organization: Joseph Burr Tyrrell at Fort Smith, Diamond Jenness at Hay River, Sir John Franklin and St. Patrick R.C. Separate School in Yellowknife, Samuel Hearne in Inuvik, and Gordon Robertson in Frobisher Bay. You will notice that all the secondary schools are named after explorers or other distinguished Canadians and the government reserves to itself the right to name secondary schools. Our settlement schools all bear Indian and Eskimo names and these are chosen by the people of the community, so we have Deninoo in Fort Resolution, Chief Jimmy Bruneau at Rae-Edzo, Kugluktuk in Coppermine, Ilihakvik in Cambridge Bay, and Nakasuk in Frobisher Bay. A very interesting paper could be prepared on the names

and the history of schools in the north, because each one commemorates an important person or an important event in the traditions of the people who named them.

In addition to the territorial schools, there are two school boards in the Northwest Territories, both of them in Yellowknife: the Yellowknife Public School Board, and St. Patrick R.C. Separate School Board, operate schools under our supervision much in the same way that schools are operated in southern Canada. As well, we have general supervisory responsibilities for the school at Rae-Edzo which is operated by a School Society. But more of this later.

Our system employs some 625 teachers and more than 110 classroom assistants, most of whom are Indian and Inuit young ladies. We have, including custodial workers, adult educators, and other staff, something like 1,200 employees in our total educational operation.

Our system is administered by superintendents, located from south to north at Fort Smith, Hay River, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Cambridge Bay, Churchill (this operation will be moving to Rankin Inlet during the current year), Frobisher Bay, and Inuvik. The superintendents in these regional offices are generally assisted by supervisors in charge of Special and Continuing Education and by teacher consultants who travel to the various schools to assist teachers with the problems they are bound to encounter in this relatively new educational environment.

The headquarters unit, which is located in Yellowknife, consists of a number of divisions. The Chief of Planning and Plant Management has the responsibility for the design, construction and maintenance of school buildings throughout the Territories. The Chief of Programme Development and his staff have the task of providing curriculum guides

and relevant school materials for the people of the Northwest Territories, and it is this division that has supervised the production of all materials you see on display. Another division is that of Continuing and Special Education which looks after the providing of Vocational Training and the supervision of Adult Education throughout the Territories. In addition, the headquarters unit provides support in such areas as administrative services, educational resources - our Educational Resource Centre circulates some 1,500 16mm. films per month throughout the N. W. T. - and the supervision of pupil residences.

I might now say a word about our pupil residence program, as it is one that has been under fire for some time. The Department of Education maintains government pupil residences in Frobisher Bay, Yellowknife, and Fort Smith. In Inuvik, the two pupil residences are operated under contract to the government, one by the Roman Catholic Church, and the other by the Anglican Church of Canada. In Fort Simpson, Fort McPherson and Rae-Edzo, the residences are operated by local native groups who enter into a contract with our department for the operation and maintenance of pupil residences. In addition to these large residences, we have cottage type hostels which are run by native parents in places like Cambridge Bay, Fort Liard and Fort Good Hope.

It has long been our policy to avoid having children taken from their homes in the early years of school to live in pupil residences, and we have made great strides in this during the past two years. Eventually, we see that residences will be for highschool students only and at the present time, it is largely only (1) youngsters from the Dewline sites where there are no schools, (2) the children of parents who are out on the land on a seasonal basis, and (3) the children who are put into the

residences by the Department of Social Development because of unsatisfactory homes, who are below highschool age. By building more schools in the settlements, and by increasing the grade levels of those schools we presently have, we are trying to get away from having young children live away from home during the school year. Because of the large size of the Northwest Territories, and because of the fact that most settlements are very small, it will be some time before we are able to avoid using the pupil residences for children who wish to attend highschool. One of the alternatives we offer to our pupil residence program is what is called "foster home care" in which we pay a per diem allowance of $5.00 to anyone who will look after a child attending school. In spite of the fact that this program is loudly acclaimed by people with little inside knowledge of the situation, it is interesting to note that a large number of Indian and Inuit parents much prefer their children to be in a pupil residence than in a foster home situation. This fact notwithstanding, it is very difficult to find a sufficient number of foster homes for all the children who must leave their own parents to attend school.

Our programs under the general umbrella of C.A.S.E., that is, Continuing and Special Education, are many and varied, and I will try to sketch for you briefly some of the activities for which our department is responsible.

At the Adult Educational Training Centre at Fort Smith we offer programs in driver training, food services, heavy duty mechanics, heavy duty operation, certified nursing assistant, an introduction to business administration, secretarial courses, life skills programs, mechanics, carpentry, telecommunications, welding and academic upgrading.

Also at Fort Smith we have one branch of our Teacher Education

Program, whose purpose it is to prepare native northerners for positions on our teaching staff. I will speak more about this later. One of the other very interesting programs held at Fort Smith is the Dental Therapist Program, which is sponsored in cooperation with the Department of National Health and Welfare and is operated by Dr. Davey, a qualified dental instructor from the University of Toronto. Over a two year period Dr. Davey and his associates, who are also practising dentists, have graduated a class of 8 young northerners who will become dental therapists in the settlements throughout the north. This program is unique in that it is the first such program in North America and the young people who graduate from it are qualified to practice many of the skills of dentistry under the supervision of a dentist, who, in the case of the Northwest Territories, may be thousands of miles distant. I must admit, with a nod to the host province of Saskatchewan, that it is my understanding that the second such program is currently in operation here.

The Department of Education and the territorial government have plans for the future, to incorporate the Adult Vocational Training Centre, the Teacher Education Program, the Dental Therapist programs and other Adult Training programs, into a Community College of the Northwest Territories. This plan is, however, far from finalized, although work is presently being done on it. Once again, from the reading we have done, we favour the model that has been used in the province of Saskatchewan.

In 1968, there was one Adult Education Centre in the Northwest Territories and in the current year there are 26 in various settlements. The adult educators in these centers, who generally have an Indian or Inuit assistant, offer programs in basic literacy, training in skill development and many other courses which meet the needs of the residents

of the particular settlement. In spite of the advances we have made in the field of adult education, it must be admitted that our endeavours in this field could well be - and have been - categorized as too little, too late. There are crying needs among the people of the north for courses in literacy in English, nutrition, home management, alcohol education, communicable diseases and a whole host of others that must provide understanding and skills that are basic to surviving in a rapidly changing society. There is little doubt that today the in-school program takes priority in both resources and manpower over the out-of-school program, and it is interesting to speculate what might have been the results if, in the early days of education in the Northwest Territories, the priorities had been reversed. It might well be that today, not only our Adult Education program would have been of greater value and worth to the people of the Northwest Territories than it presently is, but also that the school program might have been more widely accepted and more relevant to the people we are trying to serve in the communities.

But I am digressing from an account of the kinds of programs we offer - and have inadvertently presented to you one of the real problem areas in our educational system.

Although we do not call it an extension program, we are attempting to take training to where the people live, rather than bringing people to where the training is. As an example, over the past two years a prospecting and mineral identification course has been offered in some 25 centers throughout the Territories. In the same way, a small engine repair course dealing mainly with snowmobiles and outboard motors has been offered by a travelling instructor in 14 communities. Although we offer heavy duty operation and repair at Fort Smith, we are expanding our

program and offering the course in various settlements throughout the north. Presently we have instructors from the Adult Vocational Training School in Fort Smith offering courses in Cambridge Bay and Clyde River. Another of our travelling courses - although very different in nature - is our Inuktituk Language School, which is under the direction of Mr. Mick Mallon. This year, courses in the Eskimo Language are being offered in Rankin Inlet, in Coppermine, and in Frobisher Bay, besides at the summer session of the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

The three final programs that I want to mention very briefly are programs dealing mainly with post-secondary education.

Presently there are some 220 apprentices throughout the Northwest Territories who are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education in more than a dozen recognized trades. Our Department is also responsible for sending qualified students for further trades training to southern Canada. This year, there are approximately 150 native northerners who are studying in technical institutes across the country. The Government of the Northwest Territories is responsible for fees, tuition, travel, and the students are paid board and lodging at Manpower rates. The final program I will mention is our Higher Education Assistance Program which, I believe, is probably the best post-secondary program in Canada. Any student from the Northwest Territories whose parents have been resident for at least two years, is eligible, if he qualifies for admission, to attend any university in Canada, with the expenses being paid by the N. W. T. Government. Included in such expenses are travel from his place of residence to Edmonton, fees, books and a $5.00 per day board and lodging allowance. The fact that the travel expenses are paid only to Edmonton does not prevent a student from

attending any university in the country, but in this case, he is responsible for the fare between Edmonton and the university to which he chooses to go. As a matter of fact, there are students from the Northwest Territories in every university in Canada, including a number who have chosen to come to the U of S.

This is a very brief outline of some of the services and some of the programs that are offered by the Department of Education in the Northwest Territories.

I have tried to tell you what we are attempting to do. I will now try briefly to outline for you why we do it. In other words, some of the philosophical beliefs about learning on which our programs are based.

Article 26 of the United Nations Charter, to which Canada is a signatory, says: "Parents have a prior right to choose the type of education that shall be given to their children."

You will note Article 26 does not refer to white southern Canadians, or government bureaucrats, or directors of education (and I happen to represent each of these categories), as the final arbiter of a child's learning experiences. Article 26 says parents shall have the right to choose, and we in the N. W. T. Department of Education agree with this right and we are taking steps to put it into practice. Therefore, I would say that one of our most fundamental principles is that of local involvement. If we are going to provide the kind of education that parents wish for their boys and girls, then we must listen to the parents. We must try to make the home and school partners in education. The only way, it seems to me, that any education system can serve the boys and girls in the communities in which they find themselves, is by getting the parents of the children involved meaningfully in the

educational task that we share with one another. I will outline for you a little later in this talk, some of the practical ways in which we are trying to implement the principle of local involvement in our school programs in the Northwest Territories.

A second principle that we advocate is that of relevancy. We are not the only people in education who are convinced that if our schools are to truly serve our young people, they must be relevant to the needs of these young people wherever they may be. We must have an educational system in the north that is relevant to life in the north. We cannot hope to succeed if we import - as we have done in the past - a system of education that was designed for middle class white pupils. The school in the northern settlement is doomed to failure when it is looked upon as a foreign imposition of the white man. It must be part of the community, and the things of value and worth and meaning in the community must be so regarded in the school.

Let me quote an example of what I mean by non-relevant school - a Negro school in Harlem: "The Harlem child comes to school and discovers the school is not about life as he knows it at all. It doesn't have pictures of the kind of people he knows. It doesn't help him develop the skills and needs for the world in which he lives. The world of school is irrelevant at best. It forces a foreign linguistic and learning style on him, and if he does not make the adjustment of being one person in school and another in Harlem, it abandons him to the streets. The school is a harshly foreign institution and the Harlem child reacts pretty much like a conquered people. School becomes a waiting game, an endurance contest, and he is only free when he leaves."

I would like to be able to tell you that there is not the slightest similarity between this picture and the image of some of our schools in the Northwest Territories. I cannot in all honesty do that, but what I will do is point out to you some ways in which we are attempting to create a learning environment which is comfortable, meaningful and relevant to the lives of the pupils.

We believe further that the basis of learning is communication - in all its many forms - and that given the difficulties created by English being the second language of many students, it must be emphasized that every possible avenue of communication should be explored and utilized. Pantomime, cuisinaire rods, jigsaw puzzles, creative dance, physical education, art, music, drama - all are ways and means of communication that have a legitimate place in the classroom. However, when language is the communication form employed, we believe that initially it must be the language of the learner. Therefore we have set down as a policy of our educational system in the N. W. T. that in the first three years of school a child shall be taught in his own language.

Once again, I would like to tell you that we have developed a multi-cultural, multi-lingual system of education in the N. W. T., but once again I must emphasize that this is an objective and not a realization.

The final point in our philosophical bases that I wish to make can be expressed in many ways.

The fundamental premise is that education must develop and preserve the confidence and self-worth of the individual child. This is, in fact, a rejection of the "empty vessel assumption" in education, whereby the teacher assumes that the child comes to school knowing

absolutely nothing and it is the duty of the school to fill up the child with "book-larnin'". It seems to us a fairly sound pedagogical principle to build on the strengths - not the weaknesses - that a child brings to school with him, and surely one of the most amazing strengths any 6 year old child has, is his almost complete mastery of the complex system of his own language. Of course, he brings also into the classroom with him his traditions, his value systems, in short - his culture - and isn't it ridiculous for us as educators to suggest that this wealth of learning is of no value - and to start again at ground 0. The recognition of a child's language and traditions, his feelings about himself and his family, his ways of perceiving the world, and his attitudes toward learning, are ways to create pride in himself, in his parents, and in his heritage and seem to me to be a reasonable method for a child to acquire a positive image of himself as a person and as a learner. This fundamental premise presumes, therefore, that the individual child is the vital concern of the educational process, and that the system should be designed to suit the child and not vice versa.

The recognition of individual differences among children; the provision of activity centred learning; the individualization of instruction so that each child may progress in his learning activities at his own rate and in his own style; the use of concrete materials in learning - all these are methods to which joy and excitement may be brought to the learning process and through which schools become less like factory assembly lines and more like "good places for kids".

And having said this, I am very well aware that there will always be tension between two groups of educational objectives - those concerned with individual growth and fulfillment, and those concerned with the

transmission of specific skills, intellectual disciplines, and bodies of knowledge. Finding the right balance is neither easy nor obvious, and I am certainly not suggesting that we have found the final answer to this difficult problem.

Programs

In presenting some of the programs that are based on the principles that I have outlined, I hope you will see a very definite inter-relatedness among them. So that you may note the evolutionary process, as we groped - and continue to grope - toward our ideal of a multi-lingual, multi-cultural system, I am going to present them in some kind of chronological order. Few of the programs will be new to you; none of them will be perfect; all of them are in a state of becoming.

Because we wanted to bridge the gap between home and school, to give both the young child and his parent a familiar reference point in the somewhat alien world of school, and to draw the community and school closer together, more than ten years ago we instituted the practice of employing native classroom assistants. Today we have 114 classroom assistants in our schools, and each of these assistants is a member of the public service of the Northwest Territories with the same rights and privileges as any other public servant. Each of them has had one or more four-week summer training courses, and in the Keewatin Region, we have a classroom assistant consultant - a very highly trained, experienced, competent teacher - whose only task is to work with the 22 classroom assistants in the eight schools of the Region. Many of these young people conduct classes in their own language, and teach syllabics to all the children in the school. Our aim is to have at least one classroom

assistant in every K to three classroom in the N. W. T., and each year we add to the number. It is interesting to note that a number of schools, in order to increase the number of classroom assistants beyond their allotment, have traded one teaching position for two classroom assistant positions.

As a result of the success of the classroom assistants program, we began a teacher education program in 1968 to provide access and encouragement to young northern students, especially those of Indian, Eskimo or Metis origin, to enter the teaching profession and to make available to the northern education program, the cultural and linguistic advantages which such young people could bring to northern schools and classrooms.

Originally the entrance requirements for this program required a Grade 11 standing, and the program was operated partly in the N. W. T. and partly at the University of Alberta. The four month practicum in schools of the N. W. T. was supervised by members of the education faculty of the University of Alberta, and the students on the program were on university credit system, with credits being given for the courses offered in both the Territories and at the university. All the graduates of this two year program received N. W. T. certificates, and today about twenty-five of them are employed in our schools. Incidentally, these T. E. P. graduates have first priority for teaching positions in the N. W. T.

In 1973, because of our stated objective of teaching in the native language for the first three years of school, we changed the direction of our teacher education program and severed our connection with the university in spite of the fact that we greatly appreciated their contribution

to the program. We decided that we would train northern teachers in the north, and we further decided that the main criteria for entrance to the program would be a knowledge of English and a northern native language. We were able to recruit a number of applicants from among our classroom assistants - young people who had proven their interest and ability in dealing with children, and who were fluent in either Inuktituk or an Indian language.

In 1973-74 we operated two first year courses, one in Chesterfield Inlet for 14 Inuit students and one in Fort Smith for the same number of Indian students. This year we are operating a second year course in Fort Smith for 22 Inuit and Indian students and a first year course in Frobisher Bay for both Inuit and Indian students. Each of the two years consists of a four month theoretical course and a four month practicum in the schools of the N. W. T. with a two month project at the end of the practicum. This year, or second year, our graduating students will come to the University of Saskatchewan for four weeks in May and June for a course in cross-cultural education. At the conclusion of their course, all graduates of the program will receive N. W. T. certificates and positions in our schools.

As you can imagine, we came in for a certain amount of criticism concerning this somewhat unorthodox plan for training teachers. Let me quote Mr. Brian Lewis, former principal of the Teacher Education Program.

"Around me continually I hear the shrill shrieks about standards and excellence and tunefully glorious trumpetings about the profession and its quick decay.

No man cares more about standards, excellence, and dignity than myself. What concerns me is that we fall into the trap of believing that

our standards, our notions of excellence and our sense of dignity are the right ones simply because we have successfully crossed all the academic hurdles and carry all our professional tickets in our pockets.

It could be just as easily argued that teachers trained in southern institutions don't meet the standards demanded by parents in the Northwest Territories. How many of us, for example, have felt inept, both in our training and experience when faced with the complexities of our northern educational system. All I am arguing here is that we have not thrown away our standards; rather we have found new ones more in keeping with our northern system. They are:

- suitability for northern teaching
- responsiveness to community opinion
- ability to communicate in two languages
- specific training for northern teaching"

Although I can offer no guarantee of the success of this program, I am prepared to endorse Brian's ideas on the subject and we as a department are prepared to "put our money where our mouth is" in developing a cadre of northern teachers for northern boys and girls.

I have said previously in my remarks that it is the policy of our department to attempt to teach each child in his own language in the early years of his school career where it is the wish of the parents. Perhaps I should have mentioned that the attainment of such an objective is a theoretical ideal which may never be attained. It must be mentioned also that rapidly changing conditions may alter the situation in individual settlements, such that a different problem - and therefore a different solution - may develop before the solution to the now existing problem can be completed.

The N. W. T. is obviously a more multi-cultural, multi-lingual society than anywhere else in Canada outside Quebec. Languages of the Athabascan and Algonquin groups and Inuktituk are commonly used in day-to-day living, despite the dominant position of English in commerce, government, communication and education. This diversity of language and culture presents the school with the unique opportunity to capitalize on the variety of living cultures in the Territories. It also presents the education system with many challenges; how best to educate children from these other cultures; how to obtain people in our school system who are capable of doing this; how to present an effective and viable program of teaching English as a second language.

As you can well imagine, the implications and ramifications of this policy are endless, and I will not be able to attempt to deal with them tonight. I will merely sum up some of the conclusions we have reached in attempting to implement this policy.

The evidence indicates that the use of the child's native language initially as the medium of school instruction, in all but the most exceptional instances, will enable the child to learn much more effectively than if instruction is given totally in the target language. Use of the child's own language provides the child with the solid foundation of a first language and a better self-image, both factors which contribute significantly to the learning of a second language. Parents of the children must be kept informed and advised of the rationale behind using the native language in school, because most parents want their children to learn English. It is essential too that a strong program of English as a second language be run in conjunction with the child's early education. We have suggested a rough rule of thumb whereby in year 1

perhaps 90% of instruction would be in the native language and 10% in English; in year 2 the percentages would perhaps be 70 - 30; in year 3 perhaps 50 - 50; and in the 4th year of school instruction would be in English. and the native language would be carried on as a subject in the school curriculum. We have been able in some settlements in the Northwest Territories to implement this program successfully, but there are many other places at which no more than a start has been made. A very interesting and worthwhile publication One Tongue Or Two, which was written and researched by Lorne Smith of our Programme Development Division, presents evidence for the use of native languages in the classrooms and the implications for teaching English as a second language in the schools of the N. W. T. This book is in every school in the Northwest Territories and it gives an excellent theoretical and practical background to the whole subject.

Our curriculum guides, Elementary Education In the Northwest Territories, and Learning In The Middle Years, are attempts to have made-in-northern Canada-programs for northern Canadian boys and girls. Up until 1972 we used the Alberta Curriculum in the Northwest Territories with modifications, of course - but it was our experience that teachers from the various provinces across Canada - and we recruit from every province - actually used their own experience in teaching as a basis for the course of studies they presented the boys and girls in their classrooms. It should be pointed out most emphatically that our curriculum guides are just that. They are guides to the development of curriculum and they are not recipe books. They contain the philosophy of education of the N. W. T. Department of Education as well as concepts, suggestions, approaches, strategies for presenting such varied subjects as mathematics, outdoor

education, Inuktituk, English as a second language, and arts and technologies. Because we believe that there must be differences in the learning experiences presented to children in Pine Point and children in Arctic Bay, the curriculum guides offer a great amount of flexibility and a great opportunity for adaptation by the teacher. I think it is true to say that these curriculum guides require for their most effective implementation, an imaginative, creative teacher who is prepared to make education relevant to the child where he is.

The production, by our Programme Development Division, of learning materials that grow out of the experiences and knowledge of the children who use such material, has given people the opportunity to be involved in making a contribution to the education system. It has meant recognizing the fact that people have something to offer regardless of their academic background. You will be relieved when I state that I have no intention of reviewing the hundred or so publications that have been produced by our department over the past four years, but I would like to use two illustrations of how such books can be produced. The Dogrib series is a series of books based on the Dogrib people. The first part, known as the Tendi Series, portrays the life of a Dogrib boy and his family who lived near Marian Lake in the south Mackenzie 100 years ago. The stories in this series are meant to depict the various aspects of Dogrib culture, many facets of which are now almost forgotten. The Johnny series follows, portraying the life of a boy (actually Tendi's grandson) who lives in present day Rae. This series is meant to illustrate the dramatic change that has occurred in the cultures of the north. The Dogrib legends are composed of six books of traditional Dogrib stories. The material for these books was collected and

translated into English by Virginia Football, a Dogrib girl from Rae. The material was then rewritten for children by Jim McDermott of the Curriculum section. The illustrations were, for the most part, done by Bob Abraham, a Chipewyan man. These stories have been published in a multi-media kit of cassette tapes in both English and Dogrib with accompanying film strips.

The Whale Cove books, published in both English and syllabics, were written and illustrated by Mick Sikkuark of Whale Cove in the Keewatin Region. Nick has probably at most a Grade III schooling. Local people from many parts of the Northwest Territories are constantly sending us material that can be used in the classrooms and it is unfortunate that our perpetual shortage of money prevents us from publishing many more books done by local residents. Presently we are attempting to get more books into the schools which are written in various Indian dialects. The whole process is actually a snowballing one, and it is our lack of resources and manpower that prevents us from literally flooding our schools in the Northwest Territories with locally produced materials.

The final programs I want to mention are the very interrelated programs of Cultural Inclusion and Education Advisory Boards.

In nearly every settlement in the Northwest Territories there is an Advisory Board made up of local people whose responsibility is to advise the Principal and his staff on the operation of the school in that settlement. The prime responsibility of the Education Advisory Board is for drawing up a program of activities based on the local culture that shall be taught in the schools. They have the further responsibility of deciding who in the community shall offer such programs, and of paying them for their services from the budget supplied for this purpose. The

range and variety of these cultural inclusion programs is almost endless. The teaching of drum dances, a course in making kamiks, or preparing sealskins, the telling of legends and stories by the settlement elders, a program of soapstone carving and print making, a course in native sewing and embroidery and beadwork, or an on-the-land program for a week, teachers and pupils under the direction of local trappers and hunters. The program is varied and extensive, but, of course, like all programs, it varies from settlement to settlement and naturally is marked by successes and failures. It does, however, give to the people in the settlements a very firm commitment that we in the schools believe they have much to teach us, and that the things of value from their tradition and way of life are legitimate concerns of any educational system. The final aim of this program is perhaps to develop throughout the Northwest Territories many more schools that are operated as is the Rae-Edzo school, some 70 miles from Yellowknife. A School Society elected by the Dogrib people of the community is in complete control of the operation of that school and administer it, under our general supervision, with a budget which is negotiated with the Department of Education. They hire the teachers, the custodial workers, the bus drivers, the hostel parents and in general operate the school in much the same manner as does any other school board in southern Canada. We are presently preparing legislation for a new Education Ordinance that will establish both accredited (the Rae-Edzo model) and non-accredited (purely advisory) boards. Although these boards and committees are not even mentioned in the present Education Ordinance, they do much to influence educational policy. Largely at the insistence of local groups, we now have 2 school years in the N. W. T. In most larger settlements, school is in session from late

August to late June, while in the predominantly Inuit and Indian settlements, school commences in early August and is finished at the end of May so that families may go on the land to fishing or sealing camps.

As I said at the outset of my talk - and I'm sure, to some of you, that must seem like a long time ago - we in the Northwest Territories do not claim to have any definitive answers to the difficult problems that are inherent in any educational endeavour. What we are trying to do, in the words that state our purpose of education, is "to provide for all people opportunity for maximum development of their aptitudes, skills, and competencies, so that each individual may choose freely between different courses of action in such a manner that he can live a satisfying personal life while discharging his responsibilities as a participating member of a complex society".